

AMENDMENT

Kindly amend the application, without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents, as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 3 and 10-12, without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents.

Please amend claims 1, 2, 4 and 6-9, without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents, to read as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A process for the preparation of a modified masa foodstuff, the process comprising the steps of:

- (i) preparing a masa by nixtamalisation of corn; and
- (ii) contacting a reducing agent or an enzyme with
 - (a) the masa, and optionally
 - (b) the corn prior to nixtamalisation;

such that the conformation of a protein native to the corn is changed or such that a peptide or disulphite bond of a protein native to the corn is cleaved,
wherein the enzyme is a protease, and wherein the reducing agent is capable of cleaving a disulphite bond of a protein native to the corn (is cleaved)

2. (Twice Amended) The process of claim 1, wherein the masa foodstuff is selected from the group consisting of corn tortilla, soft tortilla, corn chips, tortilla chips, taco shells, and tamales.

4. (Twice Amended) The process of claim 1, wherein the reducing agent is selected from the group consisting of L-cysteine, metabisulfite, inactivated yeast extract, glutathione, and derivatives and mixtures thereof.

6. (Twice Amended) The process of claim 1, wherein the masa foodstuff further comprises guar gum.

7. (Twice Amended) A masa foodstuff obtained by the process of claim 1.

8. (Twice Amended) A masa foodstuff comprising a modified protein, wherein the protein in an unmodified form is native to corn, wherein the conformation of a protein native to the corn is changed or a peptide or disulphite bond of a protein native to the corn is cleaved to

provide the modified protein.

9. (Twice Amended) A method of using a reducing agent or an enzyme to provide a higher degree of interaction of a protein in a masa foodstuff with other proteins or other components in the masa foodstuff, when compared to an protein in an unmodified form, the method comprising the steps of:

- (i) preparing a masa by nixtamalisation of corn
- (ii) contacting a reducing agent or an enzyme with
 - (a) the masa, and optionally
 - (b) the corn prior to nixtamalisation,

wherein the protein is native to the corn, wherein the enzyme is a protease, and wherein the reducing agent is capable of cleaving a disulphite bond of the protein.

Please add new claims 13-16, without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents, as follows:

-- 13. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the reducing agent is selected from the group consisting of L-cysteine, metabisulfite, glutathione, derivatives and mixtures thereof.

14. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the masa is contacted with the reducing agent.

15. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the masa foodstuff further comprises a hydrocolloid.

16. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein the masa is contacted with the protease and a xylanase. --